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MAYOR RAHM EMANUEL AND THE CHICAGO PARK DISTRICT REOPEN THEATER ON THE LAKE AS A YEAR-ROUND PRODUCTION AND EVENT SPACE

Venue will host theater and music performances as well as special events for up to 1,500 attendees

Mayor Rahm Emanuel and Superintendent Michael P. Kelly today joined performance artists to reopen the recently renovated Theater on the Lake (TOTL). The historic building has been transformed from a summer programming site to a year-round performance and special events venue. TOTL is a 19,000 square foot lakefront venue that now includes a performance area for theater and music, a restaurant, two private event spaces and an outdoor patio.

"I am thrilled to see Theater on the Lake's transformation from the summer performance space I first visited fifteen years ago, to the incredibly unique year-round venue it is today," said Mayor Rahm Emanuel. "The unparalleled lakefront views make this one-of-a-kind destination for performances, celebrations and special occasions."

TOTL was redesigned as a versatile, multi-use venue for performances and special events. Renovations to the performance space included a new permanent stage with professional lighting and sound systems, an enclosed lobby and box office and dressing rooms. The venue now also has includes private event space, a restaurant with a state-of-the-art commercial kitchen and a full bar, outdoor seating and indoor restrooms. The south end of the lakefront terrace will accommodate al fresco dining and additional private event rentals.

The historic aesthetics of the 1920 structure have been maintained. The terra cotta roof has been replaced, more efficient electrical and HVAC systems and new plumbing have been installed and windows enable year-round use. An elevator has been installed for ADA accessibility to all levels of the facility.

"With support from the Mayor, the Chicago Park District is pleased to reopen Theater on the Lake, a historic gem that has brought theater to the Lincoln Park community for six decades," said General Superintendent and CEO Michael P. Kelly. "The revitalized Theater on the Lake building will now welcome residents and visitors to enjoy activities and entertainment on the lakefront all year long."

TOTL recently completed its 65th season this summer and its fifth production with The Chicago Park District's Night Out in the Parks. During construction, the TOTL Summer Festival was relocated to Berger Park Cultural Center. The Summer Festival will return to its home on the lakefront for the 2018 theater run and Isaac Gomez will continue in his second year as curator and

director. The performance space will host productions throughout the year and will continue involvement as part of the Chicago Park District's Night Out in the Parks series, which was launched in 2013 with support from Mayor Rahm Emanuel and the Department of Cultural Affairs and Special Events (DCASE). This season, Night Out in the Parks hosted over 1,200 cultural events and programs in over 230 parks and in all 77 community areas.

"I am excited to curate the 66th season of Theater on the Lake and to be part of the first summer back in the space," said curator, writer, dramaturg and working director Isaac Gomez. "Theater on the Lake is one of many venues that help showcase Chicago as the best theater city in this country."

The venue will host a range of private events, from large-scale benefits and galas to intimate gatherings and small dinners. The restaurant will be open to all for lunch and dinner daily and for weekend brunch. The indoor private venues have the capacity to host plated dinners for up to 500 attendees and receptions for up to 900 attendees. The Lakefront Restaurant patio, East Veranda and property lawns can host up to 1500 attendees. The facility will be available to rent beginning October 1.

As part of the Chicago Shoreline Protection Project completed in 2016, Fullerton Revetment stabilized the shoreline along TOTL. The \$31.5 million Shoreline Protection Project was funded by the Army Corps, the City of Chicago and the Chicago Park District. The total project included 1,700 feet of new revetment to manage overtopping wave flows, which created 5.8 acres of park space.

The renovation project is one of many public and private investments that support Mayor Rahm Emanuel's Building on Burnham plan to invest in parks, the Lakefront, the Chicago River and other natural areas in neighborhoods across the city. This plan follows the Mayor's successful expansion of Chicago's park system and more than \$800 million in capital investment from neighborhoods and private sources. Mayor Emanuel has made significant improvements to Chicago's lakefront. The Trail Separation project will separate the entire 18-mile path for cyclists and pedestrians, and is expected to be complete in 2018.

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Theater on the Lake was constructed in 1920. The building was originally a recuperation ward for babies suffering from tuberculosis and other diseases. During World War II, the structure was then used as a USO Center. After the war, the Chicago Park District used the venue for then-popular barn dances. In 1952, it was converted into the Theater on the Lake performance venue and showcased productions staged by the Park District's many community theater organizations. In 1996, the programming evolved into its current format, and the Chicago Park District began inviting professional theater companies to remount their best works.

The Chicago Park District is the 2014 Gold Medal Award winner, recognized for excellence in park and recreation management across the nation. For more information about the Chicago Park District's more than 8,700 acres of parkland, more than 600 parks, 26 miles of lakefront, 11 museums, two world-class conservatories, 15 cultural centers, 16 historic lagoons, nearly 50 nature areas, thousands of special events, sports and entertaining programs, please visit www.chicagoparkdistrict.com or contact the Chicago Park District at 312/742.PLAY or 312/747.2001 (TTY). Want to share your talent? Volunteer in the parks by calling, 312/742.PLAY.